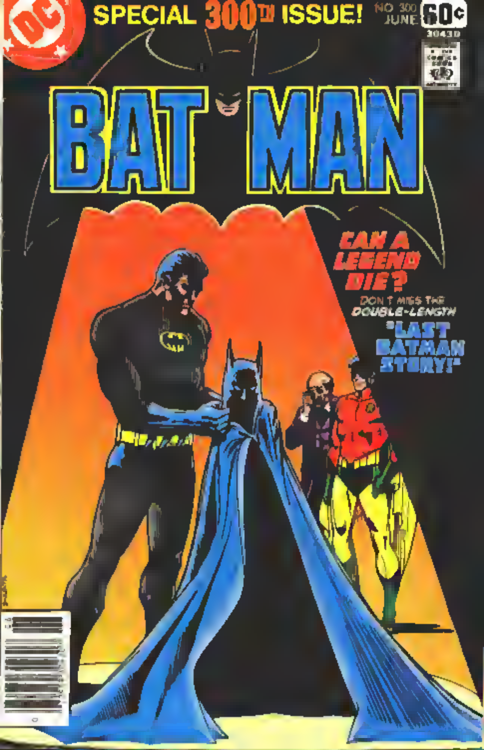
DC
SPECIAL 300TH ISSUE!
NO 300
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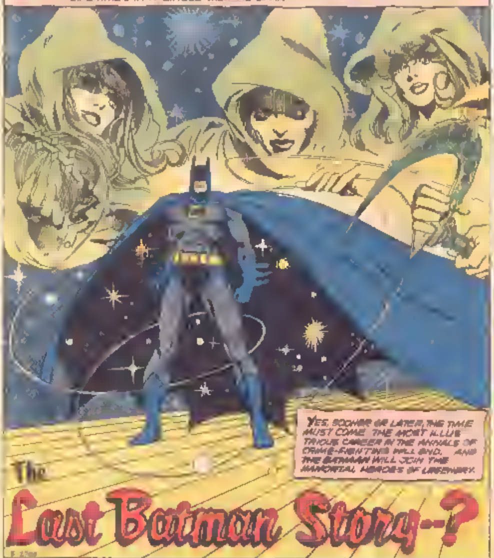
BATMAN
CAN A LEGEND DIE?
DON'T MISS THE DOUBLE-LENGTH
"LAST BATMAN STORY!"


ONE DAY IN THE FUTURE, THE THREE FATES WILL MEET--CLOTHO, WHO SPINS THE THREAD OF HUMAN LIFE... LACHESIS, WHO DETERMINES ITS LENGTH... AND ATROPOS, WHO CUTS IT OFF... AND THEY WILL DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF THE MAN WHO HAS LIVED A THOUSAND LIFETIMES IN A SINGLE MORTAL SPAN.
YES, SOONER OR LATER, THE TIME MUST COME... THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER IN THE ANNALS OF CRIME-FIGHTING WILL END... AND THE BATMAN WILL JOIN THE IMMORTAL HEROES OF LEGENDRY.

The Last Batman Story--?

WRITER	ARTISTS:	LETTERER:	COLORIST:	EDITOR:
DAVID V. REED	WALT SIMONSON & DICK GIORDANO	SHELLY LEFERMAN	JERRY SERPE	JULIUS SCHWARTZ

BATMAN, Vol. [illegible] No. [illegible] [illegible] Published [illegible] by DC COMICS INC., [illegible] Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019. Second Class Postage paid at New York, N.Y. and Additional Mailing Offices. Copyright © [illegible] by DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are [illegible]. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. Printed in U.S.A.

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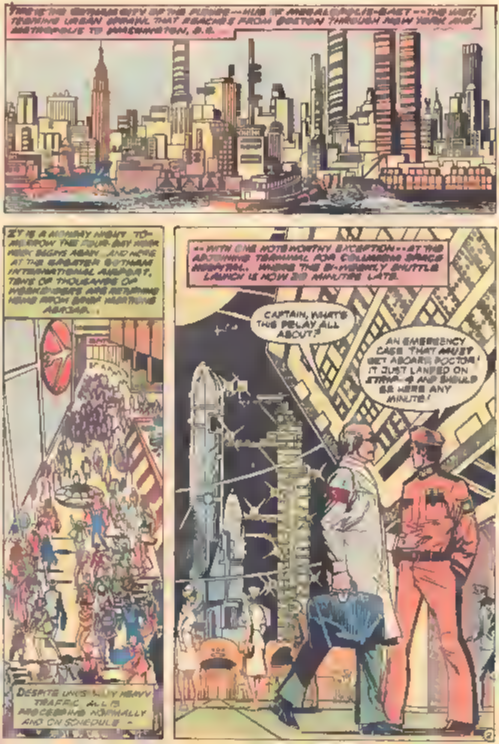
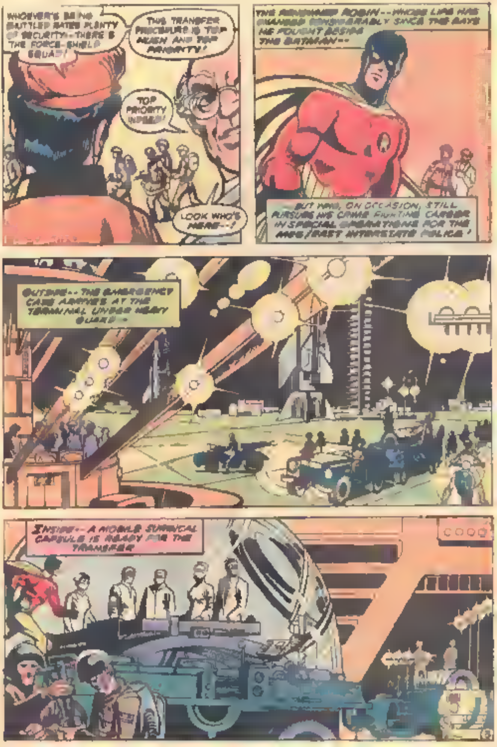
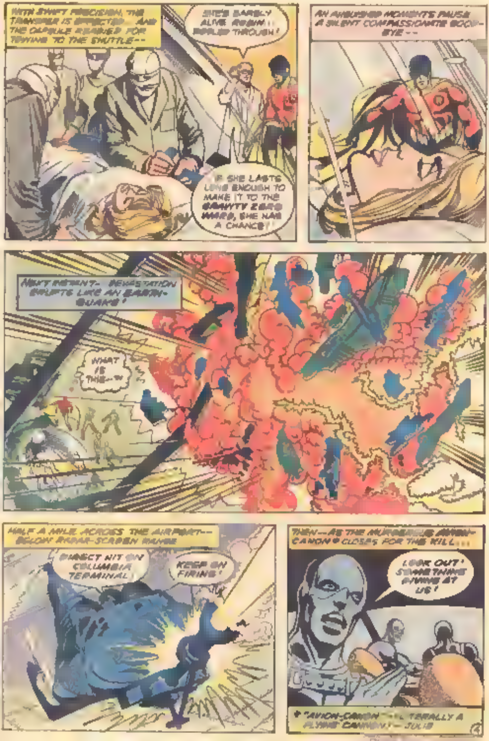
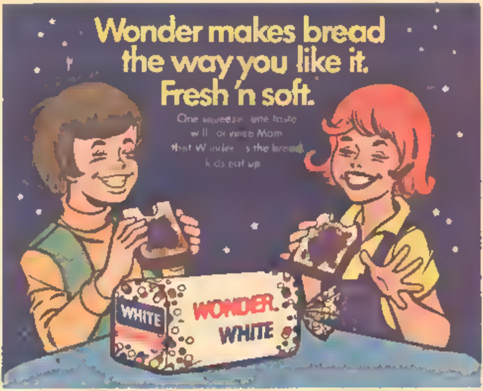

THIS IS THE GOTHAM CITY OF THE FUTURE -- HUB OF MEGALOPOLIS-EAST -- THE VAST, TEEMING URBAN SPRAWL THAT REACHES FROM BOSTON THROUGH NEW YORK AND METROPOLIS TO WASHINGTON, D.C.
IT IS A MONDAY NIGHT. TOMORROW THE FOUR-DAY WORK WEEK BEGINS AGAIN... AND HERE AT THE GREATER GOTHAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF WEEKENDERS ARE RETURNING HOME FROM BRIEF VACATIONS ABROAD...
DESPITE UNUSUALLY HEAVY TRAFFIC, ALL IS PROCEEDING NORMALLY AND ON SCHEDULE --
-- WITH ONE NOTEWORTHY EXCEPTION -- AT THE ADJOINING TERMINAL FOR COLUMBIA SPACE HOSPITAL... WHERE THE BI-WEEKLY SHUTTLE LAUNCH IS NOW 20 MINUTES LATE.
CAPTAIN, WHAT'S THIS DELAY ALL ABOUT?
AN EMERGENCY CASE THAT MUST GET ABOARD, DOCTOR! IT JUST LANDED ON STRIP-4 AND SHOULD BE HERE ANY MINUTE!


WHOEVER'S BEING SHUTTLED RATES PLENTY OF SECURITY--THERE'S THE FORCE-SHIELD SQUAD!
THIS TRANSFER PROCEDURE IS TOP HUSH AND TOP PRIORITY!
TOP PRIORITY INDEED!
LOOK WHO'S HERE--!
THE RENOWNED ROBIN--WHOSE LIFE HAS CHANGED CONSIDERABLY SINCE THE DAYS HE FOUGHT BESIDE THE BATMAN--
BUT WHO, ON OCCASION, STILL PURSUES HIS CRIME FIGHTING CAREER IN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FOR THE MEG/EAST INTERSTATE POLICE!
OUTSIDE--THE EMERGENCY CAR ARRIVES AT THE TERMINAL UNDER HEAVY GUARD--
INSIDE--A MOBILE SURGICAL CAPSULE IS READY FOR THE TRANSFER
3


WITH SWIFT PRECISION, THE TRANSFER IS EFFECTED-- AND THE CAPSULE READIED FOR TOWING TO THE SHUTTLE--
SHE'S BARELY ALIVE, ROBIN... PULLED THROUGH!
IF SHE LASTS LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE IT TO THE GRAVITY ZERO WARD, SHE HAS A CHANCE!
AN ANGUISHED MOMENT'S PAUSE-- A SILENT COMPASSIONATE GOOD-BYE--
NEXT INSTANT-- DEVASTATION ERUPTS LIKE AN EARTHQUAKE!
WHAT IS THIS--?!
HALF A MILE ACROSS THE AIRPORT-- BELOW RADAR-SCREEN RANGE
DIRECT HIT ON COLUMBIA TERMINAL!
KEEP ON FIRING!
THEN--AS THE MURDEROUS AVION-CANON* CLOSES FOR THE KILL...
LOOK OUT! SOMETHING DIVING AT US!
* "AVION-CANON"--LITERALLY A 'FLYING CANNON'! --JULIE


Wonder makes bread the way you like it. Fresh 'n soft.
One squeeze, one taste will convince Mom that Wonder is the bread kids eat up.
WHITE
WONDER
WHITE

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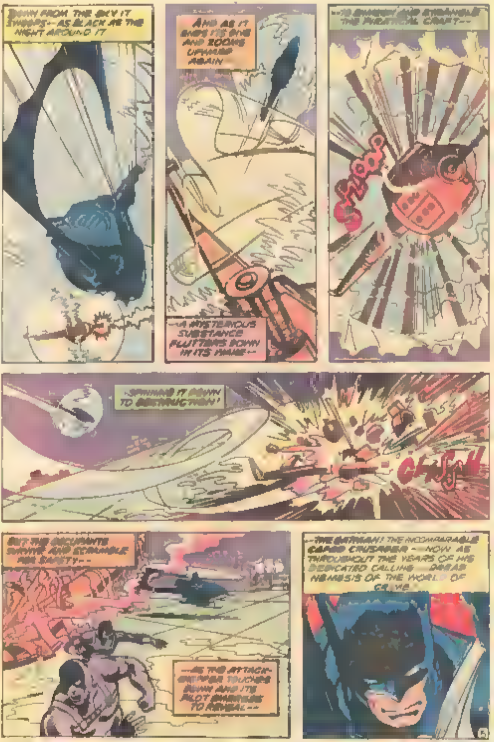
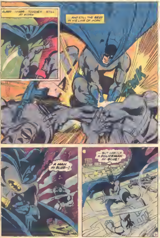
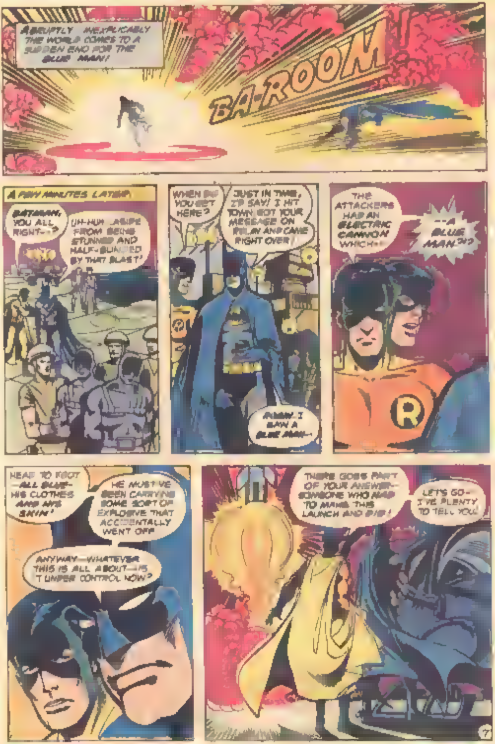
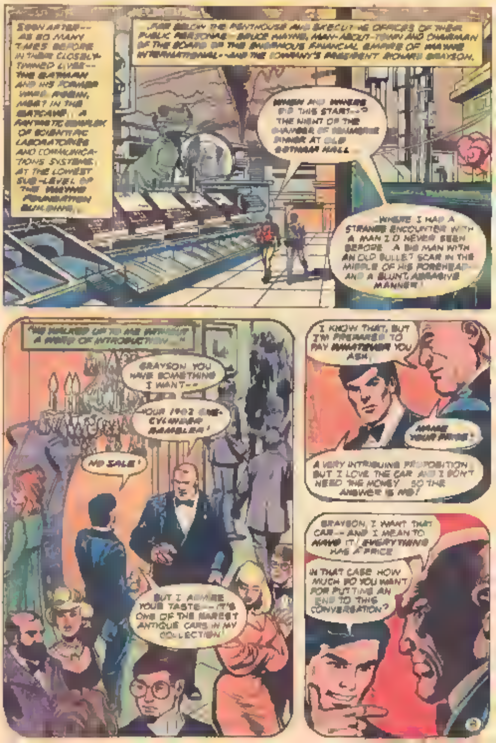

DOWN FROM THE SKY IT SWOOPS-- AS BLACK AS THE NIGHT AROUND IT
AND AS IT ENDS ITS DIVE AND ZOOMS UPWARD AGAIN
--A MYSTERIOUS SUBSTANCE FLUTTERS DOWN IN ITS WAKE--
--TO SMOTHER AND STRANGLE THE PIRATICAL CRAFT--
--SPINNING IT DOWN TO DESTRUCTION!
CRASH
BUT THE OCCUPANTS SURVIVE AND SCRAMBLE FOR SAFETY--
--AS THE ATTACK-CHOPPER TOUCHES DOWN AND ITS PILOT EMERGES TO REVEAL--
--THE BATMAN! THE INCOMPARABLE CAPED CRUSADER -- NOW AS THROUGHOUT THE YEARS OF HIS DEDICATED CALLING -- DREAD NEMESIS OF THE WORLD OF CRIME.


OLDER WISER TOUGHER ... STILL AT WORK
AND STILL THE BEST IN HIS LINE OF WORK
THWK
A MAN IN BLUE--!
--BUT HARDLY A POLICEMAN IN BLUE!


ABRUPTLY... INEXPLICABLY THE WORLD COMES TO A SUDDEN END FOR THE BLUE MAN!
BA-ROOM!
A FEW MINUTES LATER
BATMAN, YOU ALL RIGHT--?
UH-HUH ...ASIDE FROM BEING STUNNED AND HALF-BLINDED BY THAT BLAST!
WHEN DID YOU GET HERE?
JUST IN TIME, I'D SAY! I HIT TOWN, GOT YOUR MESSAGE ON RELAY AND CAME RIGHT OVER!
ROBIN, I SAW A BLUE MAN--
THE ATTACKERS HAD AN ELECTRIC CANNON WHICH--
--A BLUE MAN?!?
HEAD TO FOOT --ALL BLUE-- HIS CLOTHES AND HIS SKIN!
HE MUST'VE BEEN CARRYING SOME SORT OF EXPLOSIVE THAT ACCIDENTALLY WENT OFF
ANYWAY--WHATEVER THIS IS ALL ABOUT--IS IT UNDER CONTROL NOW?
THERE GOES PART OF YOUR ANSWER-- SOMEONE WHO HAD TO MAKE THIS LAUNCH AND DID!
LET'S GO-- I'VE PLENTY TO TELL YOU!


SOON AFTER-- AS SO MANY TIMES BEFORE IN THEIR CLOSELY-TWINED LIVES-- THE BATMAN AND HIS FORMER WARD, ROBIN, MEET IN THE BATCAVE... A FANTASTIC COMPLEX OF SCIENTIFIC LABORATORIES AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS, AT THE LOWEST SUB-LEVEL OF THE WAYNE FOUNDATION BUILDING.
...FAR BELOW THE PENTHOUSE AND EXECUTIVE OFFICES OF THEIR PUBLIC PERSONAE-- BRUCE WAYNE, MAN-ABOUT-TOWN AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE ENORMOUS FINANCIAL EMPIRE OF WAYNE INTERNATIONAL--AND THE COMPANY'S PRESIDENT, RICHARD GRAYSON.
WHEN AND WHERE DID THIS START--? THE NIGHT OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DINNER AT OLD GOTHAM HALL...
...WHERE I HAD A STRANGE ENCOUNTER WITH A MAN I'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE. A BIG MAN WITH AN OLD BULLET SCAR IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS FOREHEAD-- AND A BLUNT, ABRASIVE MANNER!
"HE WALKED UP TO ME WITHOUT A WORD OF INTRODUCTION..."
GRAYSON, YOU HAVE SOMETHING I WANT--
--YOUR 1902 ONE-CYLINDER RAMBLER!
NO SALE!
BUT I ADMIRE YOUR TASTE-- IT'S ONE OF THE RAREST ANTIQUE CARS IN MY COLLECTION!
I KNOW THAT, BUT I'M PREPARED TO PAY WHATEVER YOU ASK.
NAME YOUR PRICE!
A VERY INTRIGUING PROPOSITION, BUT I LOVE THE CAR AND I DON'T NEED THE MONEY... SO THE ANSWER IS NO!
GRAYSON, I WANT THAT CAR-- AND I MEAN TO HAVE IT! EVERYTHING HAS A PRICE.
IN THAT CASE, HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT FOR PUTTING AN END TO THIS CONVERSATION?

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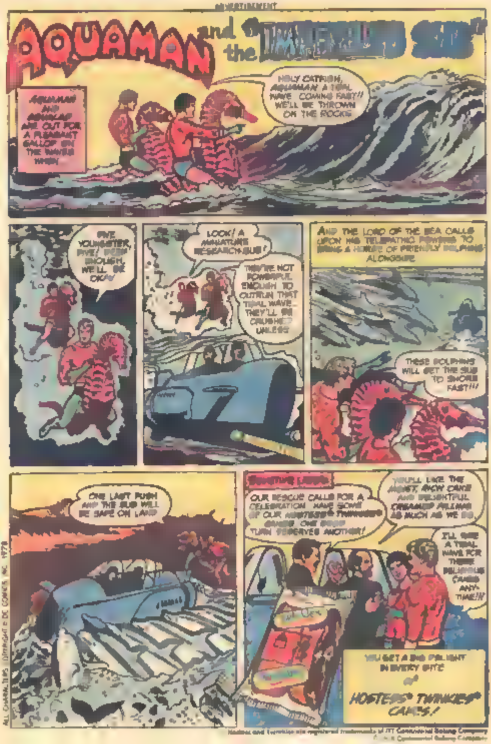
AQUAMAN and the "IMPERILED SUB"
AQUAMAN AND AQUALAD ARE OUT FOR A PLEASANT GALLOP ON THE WAVES WHEN
HOLY CATFISH, AQUAMAN! A TIDAL WAVE COMING FAST!! WE'LL BE THROWN ON THE ROCKS
FINE YOUNGSTER, FINE! DEEP ENOUGH, WE'LL BE OKAY!
LOOK! A MINIATURE RESEARCH-SUB!
THEY'RE NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH TO OUTRUN THAT TIDAL WAVE... THEY'LL BE CRUSHED UNLESS
AND THE LORD OF THE SEA CALLS UPON HIS TELEPATHIC POWERS TO BRING A HERD OF FRIENDLY DOLPHINS ALONGSIDE
THESE DOLPHINS WILL GET THE SUB TO SHORE FAST!!!
ONE LAST PUSH AND THE SUB WILL BE SAFE ON LAND
SOMETIME LATER
OUR RESCUE CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION. HAVE SOME OF OUR HOSTESS® TWINKIES® CAKES. ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER!
YOU'LL LIKE THE MOIST, RICH CAKE AND DELIGHTFUL CREAMED FILLING AS MUCH AS WE DO
I'LL GIVE A TIDAL WAVE FOR THESE DELICIOUS CAKES ANY-TIME!!!
YOU GET A BIG DELIGHT IN EVERY BITE OF HOSTESS® TWINKIES® CAKES!

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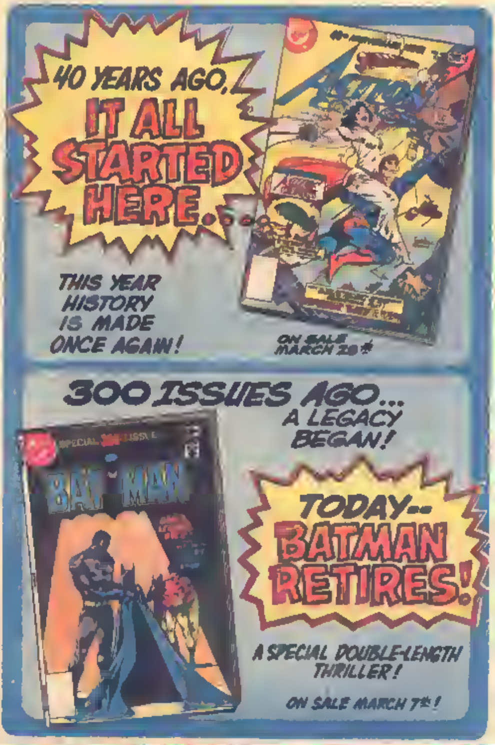


40 YEARS AGO,
IT ALL STARTED HERE...

THIS YEAR
HISTORY
IS MADE
ONCE AGAIN!

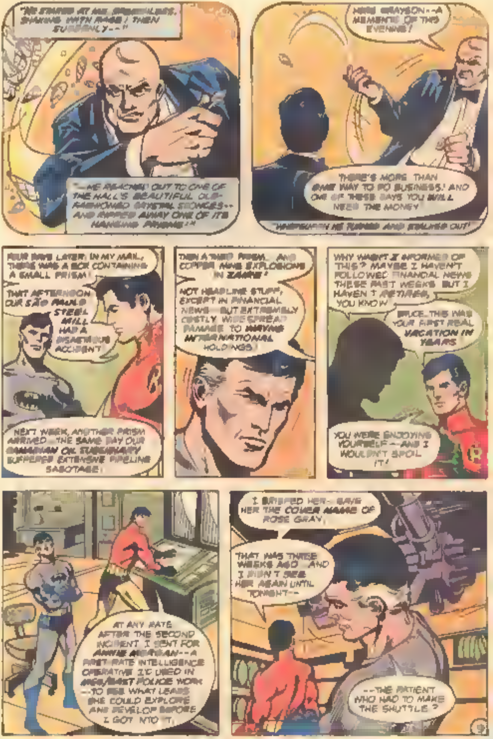
ON SALE
MARCH 28th

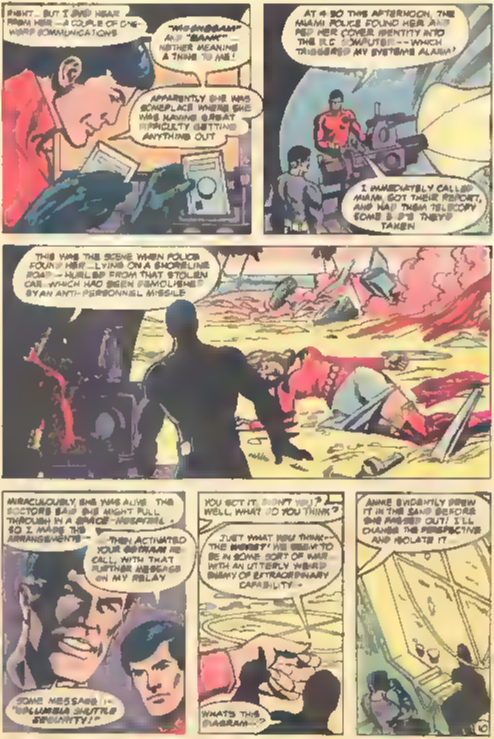
300 ISSUES AGO...
A LEGACY
BEGAN!

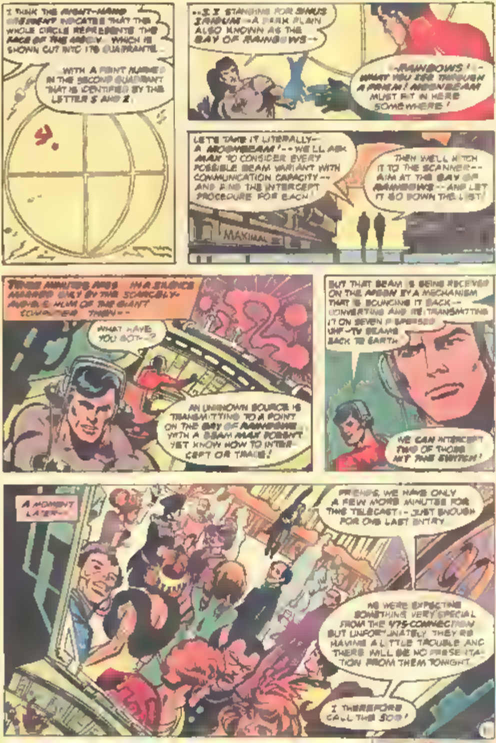
TODAY--
BATMAN
RETIRES!

A SPECIAL DOUBLE-LENGTH
THRILLER!

ON SALE MARCH 7th!


"HE STARED AT ME, SPEECHLESS, SHAKING WITH RAGE! THEN SUDDENLY--"
"--HE REACHED OUT TO ONE OF THE HALL'S BEAUTIFUL OLD-FASHIONED CRYSTAL SCONCES--AND RIPPED AWAY ONE OF ITS HANGING PRISMS!"
HERE GRAYSON--A MEMENTO OF THIS EVENING!
'THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO DO BUSINESS!' AND ONE OF THESE DAYS YOU WILL NEED THE MONEY
"WHEREUPON HE TURNED AND STALKED OUT!"
FOUR DAYS LATER, IN MY MAIL, THERE WAS A BOX CONTAINING A SMALL PRISM!
THAT AFTERNOON OUR SÃO PAULO STEEL MILL HAD A DISASTROUS ACCIDENT
NEXT WEEK, ANOTHER PRISM ARRIVED--THE SAME DAY OUR CANADIAN OIL SUBSIDIARY SUFFERED EXTENSIVE PIPELINE SABOTAGE!
THEN A THIRD PRISM... AND COPPER MINE EXPLOSIONS IN ZAIRE!
NOT HEADLINE STUFF, EXCEPT IN FINANCIAL NEWS--BUT EXTREMELY COSTLY, WIDESPREAD DAMAGE TO WAYNE INTERNATIONAL HOLDINGS!
WHY WASN'T I INFORMED OF THIS? MAYBE I HAVEN'T FOLLOWED FINANCIAL NEWS THESE PAST WEEKS BUT I HAVEN'T RETIRED, YOU KNOW
BRUCE, THIS WAS YOUR FIRST REAL VACATION IN YEARS
YOU WERE ENJOYING YOURSELF--AND I WOULDN'T SPOIL IT!
AT ANY RATE AFTER THE SECOND INCIDENT I SENT FOR ANNIE MORGAN--A FIRST-RATE INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVE I'D USED IN MIDEAST POLICE WORK--TO SEE WHAT LEADS SHE COULD EXPLORE AND DEVELOP BEFORE I GOT INTO IT.
I BRIEFED HER--GAVE HER THE COVER NAME OF ROSE GRAY.
THAT WAS THREE WEEKS AGO AND I DIDN'T SEE HER AGAIN UNTIL TONIGHT--
--THE PATIENT WHO HAD TO MAKE THE SHUTTLE?


RIGHT... BUT I DID HEAR FROM HER -- A COUPLE OF ONE-WORD COMMUNICATIONS
"WIGGINGRAM" AND "BANK" -- NEITHER MEANING A THING TO ME!
APPARENTLY SHE WAS SOMEPLACE WHERE SHE WAS HAVING GREAT DIFFICULTY GETTING ANYTHING OUT
AT 4:30 THIS AFTERNOON, THE MIAMI POLICE FOUND HER AND FED HER COVER IDENTITY INTO THE R.C. COMPUTER -- WHICH TRIGGERED MY SYSTEM'S ALARM!
I IMMEDIATELY CALLED MIAMI, GOT THEIR REPORT, AND HAD THEM TELECOPY SOME 3-D'S THEY'D TAKEN
THIS WAS THE SCENE WHEN POLICE FOUND HER... LYING ON A SHORELINE ROAD -- HURLED FROM THAT STOLEN CAR... WHICH HAD BEEN DEMOLISHED BY AN ANTI-PERSONNEL MISSILE
MIRACULOUSLY, SHE WAS ALIVE. THE DOCTORS SAID SHE MIGHT PULL THROUGH IN A SPACE-HOSPITAL... SO I MADE THE ARRANGEMENTS --
-- THEN ACTIVATED YOUR GOTHAM RE-CALL, WITH THAT FURTHER MESSAGE ON MY RELAY
SOME MESSAGE!! -- "COLUMBIA SHUTTLE SECURITY!"
YOU GOT IT, DIDN'T YOU? WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
JUST WHAT YOU THINK -- THE WORST! WE SEEM TO BE IN SOME SORT OF WAR WITH AN UTTERLY WEIRD ENEMY OF EXTRAORDINARY CAPABILITY --
WHAT'S THIS DIAGRAM --?
ANNE EVIDENTLY DREW IT IN THE SAND BEFORE SHE PASSED OUT! I'LL CHANGE THE PERSPECTIVE AND ISOLATE IT --


I THINK THE RIGHT-HAND CRESCENT INDICATES THAT THE WHOLE CIRCLE REPRESENTS THE FACE OF THE MOON -- WHICH IS SHOWN CUT INTO ITS QUADRANTS --
WITH A POINT MARKED IN THE SECOND QUADRANT THAT IS IDENTIFIED BY THE LETTERS S AND I.
--S I STANDING FOR SINUS IRIDUM -- A DARK PLAIN ALSO KNOWN AS THE BAY OF RAINBOWS --
-- RAINBOWS! -- WHAT YOU SEE THROUGH A PRISM! MOONBEAM MUST FIT IN HERE SOMEWHERE!
LET'S TAKE IT LITERALLY -- A MOONBEAM! -- WE'LL ASK MAX TO CONSIDER EVERY POSSIBLE BEAM VARIANT WITH COMMUNICATION CAPACITY -- AND FIND THE INTERCEPT PROCEDURE FOR EACH!
THEN WE'LL HITCH IT TO THE SCANNER -- AIM AT THE BAY OF RAINBOWS -- AND LET IT GO DOWN THE LIST!
MAXIMAL
THREE MINUTES PASS -- IN A SILENCE MARRED ONLY BY THE SCARCELY-AUDIBLE HUM OF THE GIANT COMPUTER -- THEN --
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT --?
AN UNKNOWN SOURCE IS TRANSMITTING TO A POINT ON THE BAY OF RAINBOWS -- WITH A BEAM MAX DOESN'T YET KNOW HOW TO INTERCEPT OR TRACE!
BUT THAT BEAM IS BEING RECEIVED ON THE MOON BY A MECHANISM THAT IS BOUNCING IT BACK -- CONVERTING AND RE-TRANSMITTING IT ON SEVEN DISPERSED UHF-TV BEAMS BACK TO EARTH.
WE CAN INTERCEPT TWO OF THOSE -- HIT THE SWITCH!
A MOMENT LATER --
FRIENDS, WE HAVE ONLY A FEW MORE MINUTES FOR THIS TELECAST -- JUST ENOUGH FOR ONE LAST ENTRY.
WE WERE EXPECTING SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL FROM THE '75 CONNECTION BUT UNFORTUNATELY THEY'RE HAVING A LITTLE TROUBLE AND THERE WILL BE NO PRESENTATION FROM THEM TONIGHT.
I THEREFORE CALL THE 30s!

Who is HAWKMAN--

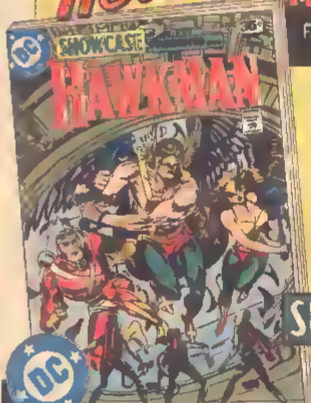
THE WINGED HERO WHO SOARS THROUGH SPACE--HIS KEEN EYES ALERT HIS MIGHTY BODY TENSED TO DO BATTLE WITH THE FORCES OF EVIL?

Why does HAWKMAN

FIGHT THE MENACES OF THE ***PRESENT*** WITH WEAPONS OF THE ***PAST*** AND SCIENCE OF THE ***FUTURE***?

How does HAWKMAN

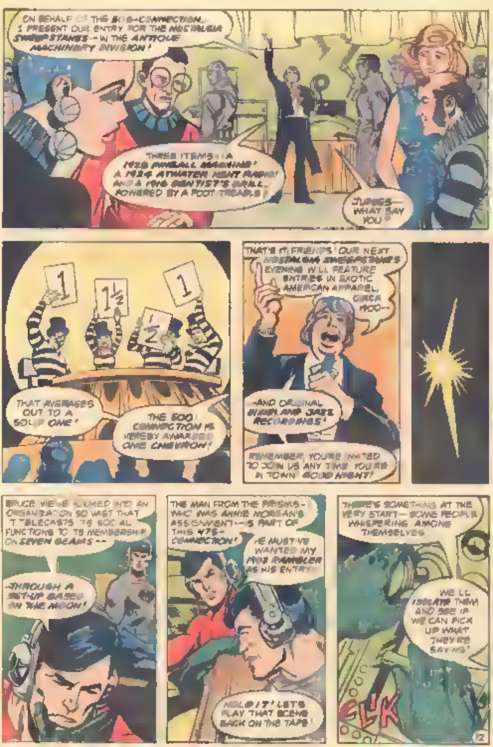
JOIN FORCES WITH FAMED STAR-TRAVELER ***ADAM STRANGE***?

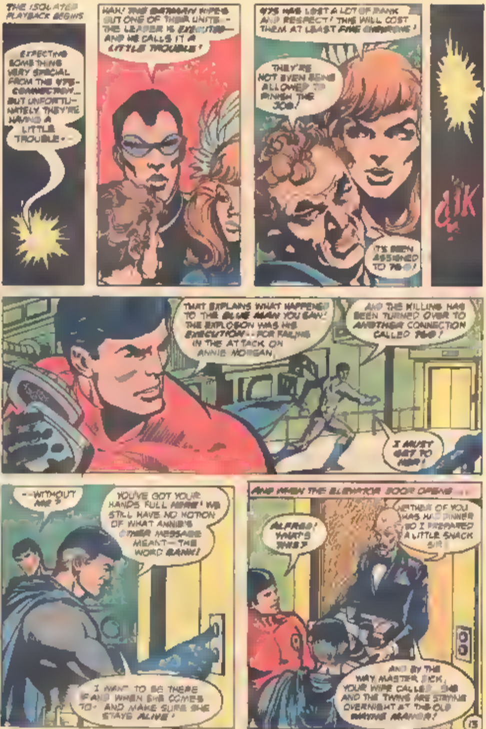


For the surprising answers to these baffling questions, read the latest thrill-packed issue of

SHOWCASE

ON SALE MARCH 16th!


ON BEHALF OF THE 500-CONNECTION, I PRESENT OUR ENTRY FOR THE NOSTALGIA SWEEPSTAKES -- IN THE ANTIQUE MACHINERY DIVISION!
THREE ITEMS -- A 1928 PINBALL MACHINE! A 1924 ATWATER KENT RADIO! AND A 1916 DENTIST'S DRILL, POWERED BY A FOOT TREADLE!
JUDGES -- WHAT SAY YOU?
1
1½
½
1
THAT AVERAGES OUT TO A SOLID ONE!
THE 500 CONNECTION IS HEREBY AWARDED ONE CHEVRON!
THAT'S IT, FRIENDS! OUR NEXT NOSTALGIA SWEEPSTAKES EVENING WILL FEATURE ENTRIES IN EXOTIC AMERICAN APPAREL, CIRCA 1900--
--AND ORIGINAL DIXIELAND JAZZ RECORDINGS!
REMEMBER, YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN US ANY TIME YOU'RE IN TOWN! GOOD NIGHT!
BRUCE, WE'VE HOOKED INTO AN ORGANIZATION SO VAST THAT IT TELECASTS ITS SOCIAL FUNCTIONS TO ITS MEMBERSHIP ON SEVEN BEAMS --
-THROUGH A SET-UP BASED ON THE MOON!
THE MAN FROM THE PRISMS -- WHO WAS ANNIE MORGAN'S ASSIGNMENT -- IS PART OF THIS 500-CONNECTION!
HE MUST'VE WANTED MY 1902 RAMBLER AS HIS ENTRY!
HOLD IT! LET'S PLAY THAT SCENE BACK ON THE TAPE!
THERE'S SOMETHING AT THE VERY START -- SOME PEOPLE WHISPERING AMONG THEMSELVES
WE'LL ISOLATE THEM AND SEE IF WE CAN PICK UP WHAT THEY'RE SAYING!
CLIK


THE ISOLATED PLAYBACK BEGINS
EXPECTING SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL FROM THE 975-CONNECTION... BUT UNFORTUNATELY THEY'RE HAVING A LITTLE TROUBLE--
HAH! THE BATMAN WIPES OUT ONE OF THEIR UNITS -- THE LEADER IS EXECUTED -- AND HE CALLS IT A LITTLE TROUBLE!
975 HAS LOST A LOT OF RANK AND RESPECT! THIS WILL COST THEM AT LEAST FIVE CHEVRONS!
THEY'RE NOT EVEN BEING ALLOWED TO FINISH THE JOB!
IT'S BEEN ASSIGNED TO 760!
CLIK
THAT EXPLAINS WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BLUE MAN YOU SAW! THE EXPLOSION WAS HIS EXECUTION -- FOR FAILING IN THE ATTACK ON ANNIE MORGAN.
AND THE KILLING HAS BEEN TURNED OVER TO ANOTHER CONNECTION CALLED 760!
I MUST GET TO HER!
--WITHOUT ME?
YOU'VE GOT YOUR HANDS FULL HERE! WE STILL HAVE NO NOTION OF WHAT ANNIE'S OTHER MESSAGE MEANT -- THE WORD RANK!
I WANT TO BE THERE IF AND WHEN SHE COMES TO -- AND MAKE SURE SHE STAYS ALIVE!
AND WHEN THE ELEVATOR DOOR OPENS...
ALFRED! WHAT'S THIS?
NEITHER OF YOU HAS HAD DINNER SO I PREPARED A LITTLE SNACK SIR!
AND BY THE WAY MASTER DICK, YOUR WIFE CALLED. SHE AND THE TWINS ARE STAYING OVERNIGHT AT THE OLD WAYNE MANOR!

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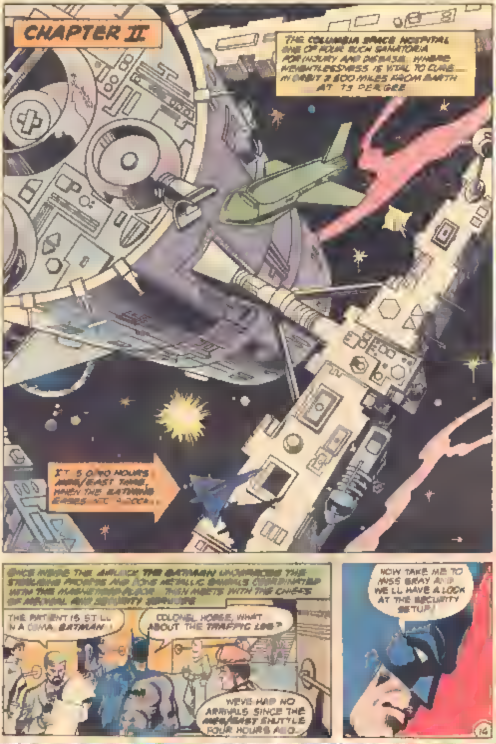
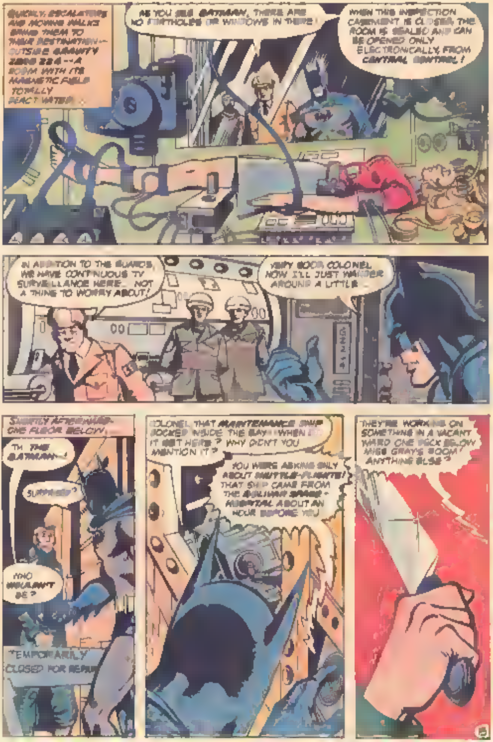
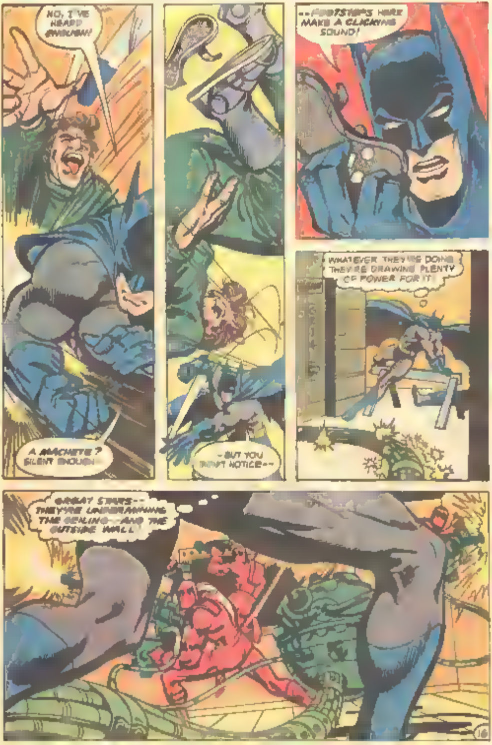
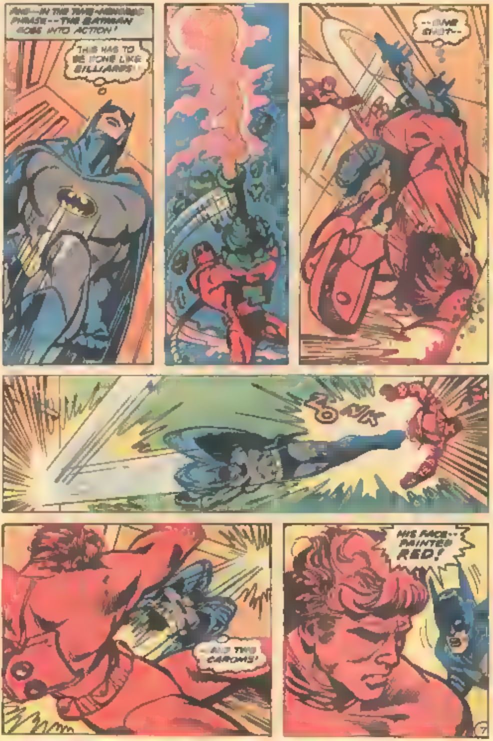
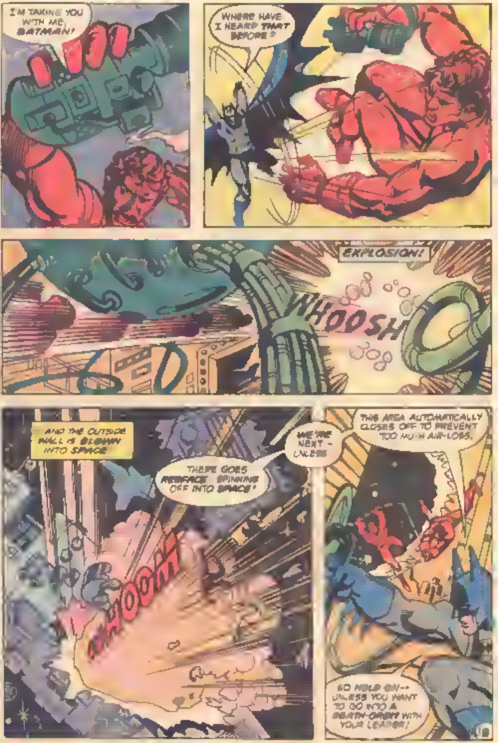
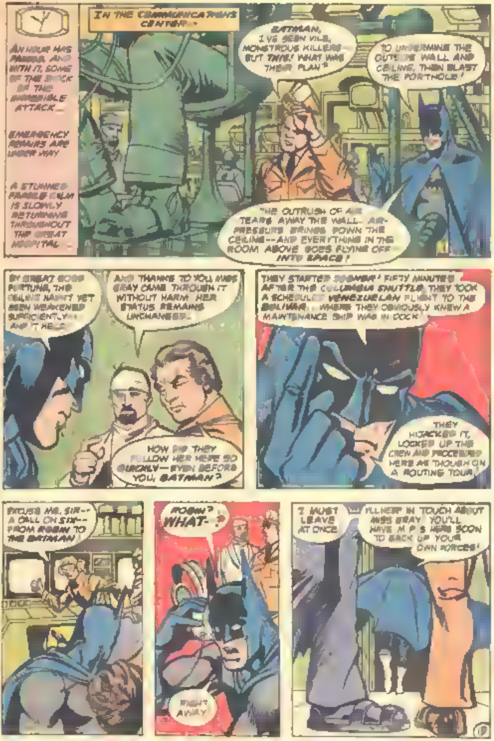

CHAPTER II
THE COLUMBIA SPACE HOSPITAL ONE OF FOUR SUCH SANATORIA FOR INJURY AND DISEASE WHERE WEIGHTLESSNESS IS VITAL TO CURE... IN ORBIT 2,500 MILES FROM EARTH AT 13 PERIGEE
IT'S 0700 HOURS MID/EAST TIME WHEN THE BATWING EASES INTO DOCK...
ONCE INSIDE THE AIRLOCK THE BATMAN UNHARNESSES THE STABILIZING PROPS AND DONS METALLIC SANDALS COORDINATED WITH THE MAGNETIZED FLOOR. THEN MEETS WITH THE CHIEFS OF MEDICAL AND SECURITY SERVICES
THE PATIENT IS STILL IN A COMA, BATMAN!
COLONEL HORSE, WHAT ABOUT THE TRAFFIC LOG?
WE'VE HAD NO ARRIVALS SINCE THE MID/EAST SHUTTLE FOUR HOURS AGO...
NOW TAKE ME TO MISS GRAY AND WE'LL HAVE A LOOK AT THE SECURITY SETUP!

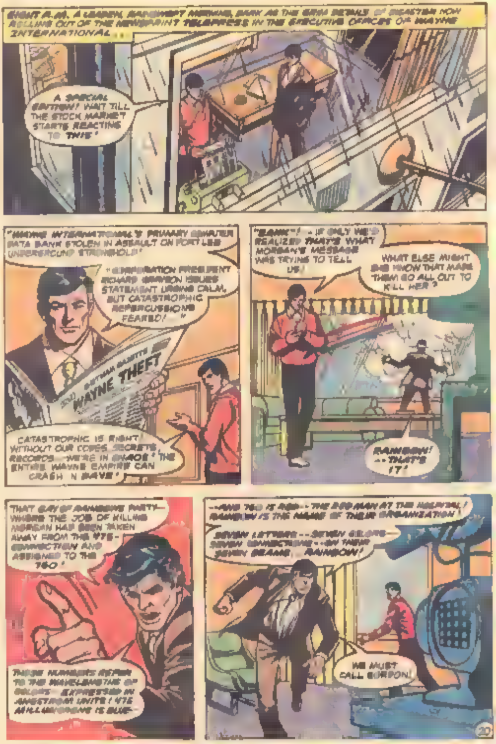

QUICKLY, ESCALATORS AND MOVING WALKS BRING THEM TO THEIR DESTINATION -- OUTSIDE GRAVITY ZERO 224 -- A ROOM WITH ITS MAGNETIC FIELD TOTALLY DEACTIVATED...
AS YOU SEE BATMAN, THERE ARE NO PORTHOLES OR WINDOWS IN THERE!
WHEN THIS INSPECTION CASEMENT IS CLOSED, THE ROOM IS SEALED AND CAN BE OPENED ONLY ELECTRONICALLY, FROM CENTRAL CONTROL!
IN ADDITION TO THE GUARDS, WE HAVE CONTINUOUS TV SURVEILLANCE HERE... NOT A THING TO WORRY ABOUT!
VERY GOOD, COLONEL. NOW I'LL JUST WANDER AROUND A LITTLE...
GZ 224
SHORTLY AFTERWARD -- ONE FLOOR BELOW...
I'M THE BATMAN--!
SURPRISED?
WHO WOULDN'T BE?
TEMPORARILY CLOSED FOR REPAI
COLONEL, THAT MAINTENANCE SHIP DOCKED INSIDE THE BAY -- WHEN DID IT GET HERE? WHY DIDN'T YOU MENTION IT?
YOU WERE ASKING ONLY ABOUT SHUTTLE-FLIGHTS! THAT SHIP CAME FROM THE BOLIVAR SPACE-HOSPITAL ABOUT AN HOUR BEFORE YOU
THEY'RE WORKING ON SOMETHING IN A VACANT WARD ONE DECK BELOW MISS GRAY'S ROOM! ANYTHING ELSE?

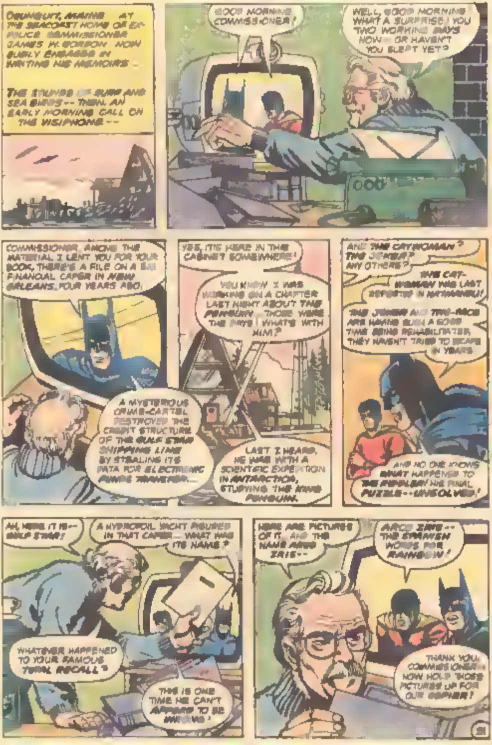

NO, I'VE HEARD ENOUGH!
A MACHETE? SILENT ENOUGH--
--BUT YOU DIDN'T NOTICE--
--FOOTSTEPS HERE MAKE A CLACKING SOUND!
WHATEVER THEY'RE DOING THEY'RE DRAWING PLENTY OF POWER FOR IT!
GREAT STARS-- THEY'RE UNDERMINING THE CEILING--AND THE OUTSIDE WALL!

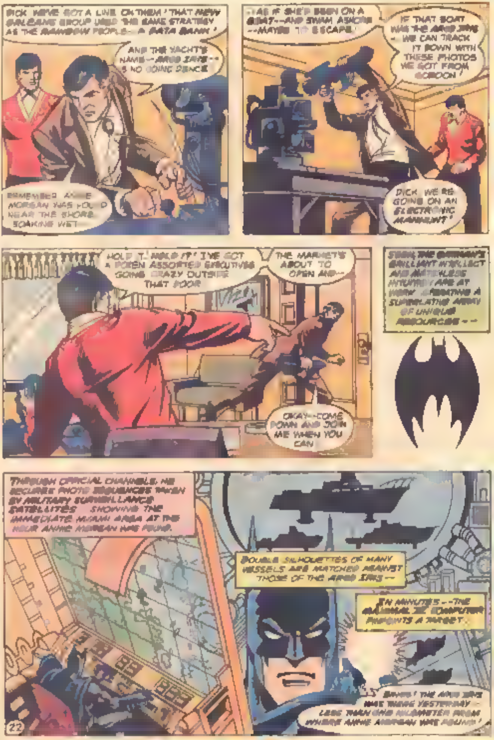

AND--IN THE TIME-HONORED PHRASE--THE BATMAN GOES INTO ACTION!
THIS HAS TO BE DONE LIKE BILLIARDS!
--ONE SHOT--
ZONK
--AND TWO CAROMS!
HIS FACE--PAINTED RED!
7

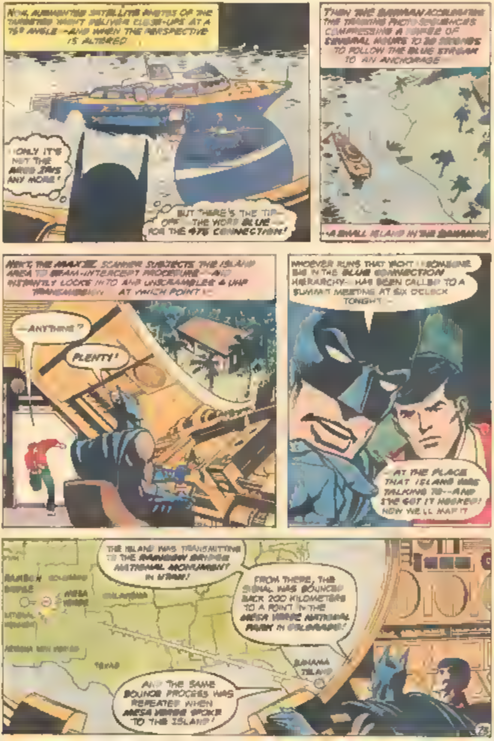

I'M TAKING YOU WITH ME, BATMAN!
WHERE HAVE I HEARD THAT BEFORE?
EXPLOSION!
WHOOSH
AND THE OUTSIDE WALL IS BLOWN INTO SPACE
THERE GOES REDFACE SPINNING OFF INTO SPACE!
WE'RE NEXT -- UNLESS
WHOOM
THIS AREA AUTOMATICALLY CLOSES OFF TO PREVENT TOO MUCH AIR-LOSS.
SO HOLD ON -- UNLESS YOU WANT TO GO INTO A DEATH-ORBIT WITH YOUR LEADER!

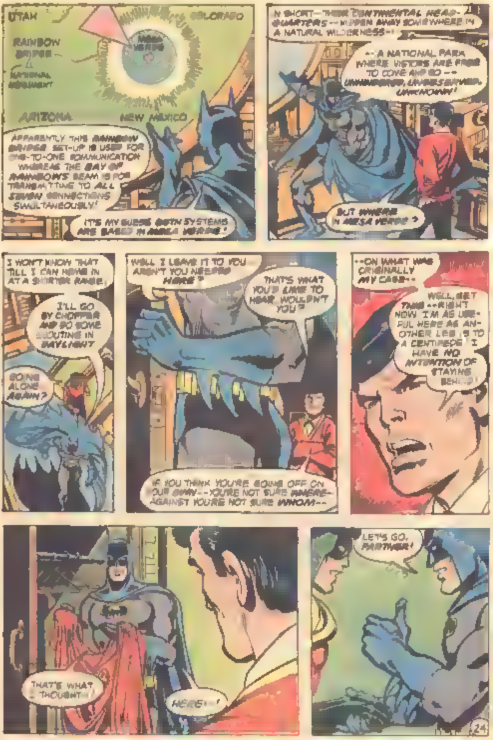

IN THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER--
AN HOUR HAS PASSED, AND WITH IT, SOME OF THE SHOCK OF THE INCREDIBLE ATTACK...
EMERGENCY REPAIRS ARE UNDER WAY.
A STUNNED, FRAGILE CALM IS SLOWLY RETURNING THROUGHOUT THE GREAT HOSPITAL...
BATMAN, I'VE SEEN VILE, MONSTROUS KILLERS-- BUT THIS! WHAT WAS THEIR PLAN?
TO UNDERMINE THE OUTSIDE WALL AND CEILING, THEN BLAST THE PORTHOLE!
THE OUTRUSH OF AIR TEARS AWAY THE WALL-- AIR-PRESSURE BRINGS DOWN THE CEILING--AND EVERYTHING IN THE ROOM ABOVE GOES FLYING OFF INTO SPACE!
BY GREAT GOOD FORTUNE, THE CEILING HADN'T YET BEEN WEAKENED SUFFICIENTLY-- AND IT HELD.
AND THANKS TO YOU, MISS GRAY CAME THROUGH IT WITHOUT HARM. HER STATUS REMAINS UNCHANGED.
HOW DID THEY FOLLOW HER HERE SO QUICKLY--EVEN BEFORE YOU, BATMAN?
THEY STARTED SOONER! FIFTY MINUTES AFTER THE COLUMBIA SHUTTLE, THEY TOOK A SCHEDULED VENEZUELAN FLIGHT TO THE BOLIVAR... WHERE THEY OBVIOUSLY KNEW A MAINTENANCE SHIP WAS IN DOCK.
THEY HIJACKED IT, LOCKED UP THE CREW AND PROCEEDED HERE AS THOUGH ON A ROUTINE TOUR!
EXCUSE ME, SIR-- A CALL ON SIX-- FROM ROBIN TO THE BATMAN!
ROBIN? WHAT--?
RIGHT AWAY!
I MUST LEAVE AT ONCE!
I'LL KEEP IN TOUCH ABOUT MISS GRAY. YOU'LL HAVE M.P.'S HERE SOON TO BACK UP YOUR OWN FORCES!


EIGHT A.M. A LEADEN, RAINSWEPT MORNING, DARK AS THE GRIM DETAILS OF DISASTER NOW ROLLING OUT OF THE NEWSPRINT TELEPRESS IN THE EXECUTIVE OFFICES OF WAYNE INTERNATIONAL...
A SPECIAL EDITION! WAIT TILL THE STOCK MARKET STARTS REACTING TO THIS!
"WAYNE INTERNATIONAL'S PRIMARY COMPUTER DATA BANK STOLEN IN ASSAULT ON FORT LEE UNDERGROUND STRONGHOLD!"
"CORPORATION PRESIDENT RICHARD GRAYSON ISSUES STATEMENT URGING CALM, BUT CATASTROPHIC REPERCUSSIONS FEARED!"
GOTHAM GAZETTE
WAYNE THEFT
CATASTROPHIC IS RIGHT! WITHOUT OUR CODES, SECRETS, RECORDS--WE'RE IN CHAOS! THE ENTIRE WAYNE EMPIRE CAN CRASH IN DAYS!
"BANK"! --IF ONLY WE'D REALIZED THAT'S WHAT MORGAN'S MESSAGE WAS TRYING TO TELL US!
WHAT ELSE MIGHT SHE KNOW THAT MADE THEM GO ALL OUT TO KILL HER?
RAINBOW! --THAT'S IT!
THAT DAY OF RAINBOW'S PARTY-- WHERE THE JOB OF KILLING MORGAN HAS BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM THE 475-CONNECTION AND ASSIGNED TO THE 760!
THOSE NUMBERS REFER TO THE WAVELENGTHS OF COLORS--EXPRESSED IN ANGSTROM UNITS! 475 MILLIMICRONS IS BLUE--
--AND 760 IS RED--THE RED MAN AT THE HOSPITAL! RAINBOW IS THE NAME OF THEIR ORGANIZATION!
SEVEN LETTERS--SEVEN COLORS--SEVEN CONNECTIONS--ON THEIR SEVEN BEAMS... RAINBOW!
WE MUST CALL GORDON!

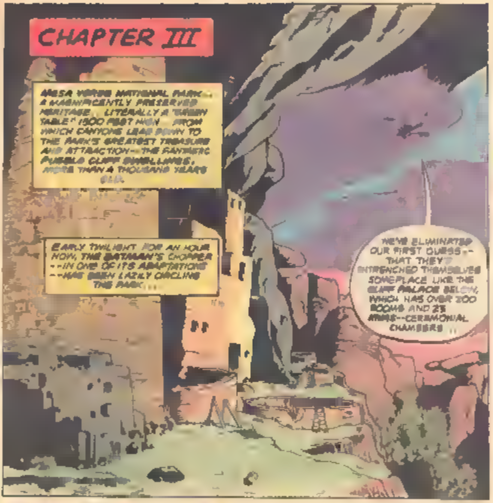

OGUNQUIT, MAINE -- AT THE SEACOAST HOME OF EX-POLICE COMMISSIONER JAMES W. GORDON -- NOW BUSILY ENGAGED IN WRITING HIS MEMOIRS --
THE SOUNDS OF SURF AND SEA BIRDS -- THEN, AN EARLY MORNING CALL ON THE VISIPHONE --
GOOD MORNING COMMISSIONER!
WELL, GOOD MORNING -- WHAT A SURPRISE! YOU TWO WORKING DAYS NOW -- OR HAVEN'T YOU SLEPT YET?
COMMISSIONER, AMONG THE MATERIAL I LENT YOU FOR YOUR BOOK, THERE'S A FILE ON A BIG FINANCIAL CAPER IN NEW ORLEANS, FOUR YEARS AGO.
A MYSTERIOUS CRIME-CARTEL DESTROYED THE CREDIT STRUCTURE OF THE GULF STAR SHIPPING LINE BY STEALING ITS DATA FOR ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER...
YES, IT'S HERE IN THE CABINET SOMEWHERE!
YOU KNOW, I WAS WORKING ON A CHAPTER LAST NIGHT ABOUT THE PENGUIN -- THOSE WERE THE DAYS! WHAT'S WITH HIM?
LAST I HEARD, HE WAS WITH A SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION IN ANTARCTICA, STUDYING THE KING PENGUIN.
AND THE CATWOMAN? THE JOKER? ANY OTHERS?
THE CATWOMAN WAS LAST REPORTED IN KATMANDU!
THE JOKER AND TWO-FACE ARE HAVING SUCH A GOOD TIME BEING REHABILITATED, THEY HAVEN'T TRIED TO ESCAPE IN YEARS.
AND NO ONE KNOWS WHAT HAPPENED TO THE RIDDLER! HIS FINAL PUZZLE -- UNSOLVED!
AH, HERE IT IS -- GULF STAR!
A HYDROFOIL YACHT FIGURED IN THAT CAPER -- WHAT WAS ITS NAME?
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO YOUR FAMOUS TOTAL RECALL?
THIS IS ONE TIME HE CAN'T AFFORD TO BE WRONG!
HERE ARE PICTURES OF IT, AND THE NAME ARCO IRIS --
ARCO IRIS -- THE SPANISH WORDS FOR RAINBOW!
THANK YOU, COMMISSIONER -- NOW HOLD THOSE PICTURES UP FOR OUR COPIER!

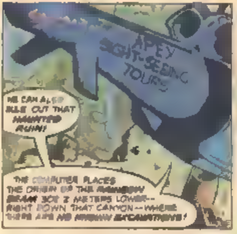

DICK, WE'VE GOT A LINE ON THEM! THAT NEW ORLEANS GROUP USED THE SAME STRATEGY AS THE RAINBOW PEOPLE-- A DATA BANK!
AND THE YACHT'S NAME--ARGO IRIS--IS NO COINCIDENCE
REMEMBER ANNIE MORGAN WAS FOUND NEAR THE SHORE SOAKING WET--
--AS IF SHE'D BEEN ON A BOAT--AND SWAM ASHORE --MAYBE TO ESCAPE!
IF THAT BOAT WAS THE ARGO IRIS --WE CAN TRACK IT DOWN WITH THESE PHOTOS WE GOT FROM GORDON!
DICK, WE'RE GOING ON AN ELECTRONIC MANHUNT!
HOLD IT--HOLD IT! I'VE GOT A DOZEN ASSORTED EXECUTIVES GOING CRAZY OUTSIDE THAT DOOR
THE MARKET'S ABOUT TO OPEN AND--
OKAY--COME DOWN AND JOIN ME WHEN YOU CAN
SOON, THE BATMAN'S BRILLIANT INTELLECT AND MATCHLESS INTUITION ARE AT WORK, OPERATING A SUPERLATIVE ARRAY OF UNIQUE RESOURCES--
THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS, HE SECURES PHOTO SEQUENCES TAKEN BY MILITARY SURVEILLANCE SATELLITES, SHOWING THE IMMEDIATE MIAMI AREA AT THE HOUR ANNIE MORGAN WAS FOUND.
DOUBLE SILHOUETTES OF MANY VESSELS ARE MATCHED AGAINST THOSE OF THE ARGO IRIS--
IN MINUTES--THE [illegible] COMPUTER PINPOINTS A TARGET.
BINGO! THE ARGO IRIS WAS THERE YESTERDAY-- LESS THAN ONE KILOMETER FROM WHERE ANNIE MORGAN WAS FOUND!
22

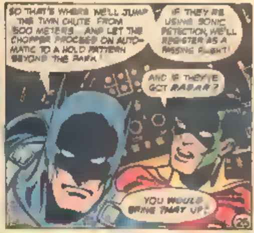

NOW, AUGMENTED SATELLITE PHOTOS OF THE TARGETED YACHT DELIVER CLOSE-UPS AT A 75° ANGLE --AND WHEN THE PERSPECTIVE IS ALTERED . . .
ONLY IT'S NOT THE [illegible] ANY MORE!
BUT THERE'S THE TIP-OFF -- THE WORD BLUE -- FOR THE 475 CONNECTION!
THEN THE BATMAN ACCELERATES THE TRACKING PHOTO-SEQUENCES COMPRESSING A PERIOD OF SEVERAL HOURS TO 30 SECONDS TO FOLLOW THE BLUE STREAM TO AN ANCHORAGE
--A SMALL ISLAND IN THE BAHAMAS!
NEXT, THE MAX-III SCANNER SUBJECTS THE ISLAND AREA TO BEAM-INTERCEPT PROCEDURE -- AND INSTANTLY LOCKS INTO AND UNSCRAMBLES A UHF TRANSMISSION . . . AT WHICH POINT . . .
--ANYTHING?
PLENTY!
WHOEVER RUNS THAT YACHT -- SOMEONE BIG IN THE BLUE CONNECTION HIERARCHY -- HAS BEEN CALLED TO A SUMMIT MEETING AT SIX O'CLOCK TONIGHT --
--AT THE PLACE THAT ISLAND WAS TALKING TO -- AND I'VE GOT IT HOOKED! NOW WE'LL MAP IT
THE ISLAND WAS TRANSMITTING TO THE RAINBOW BRIDGE NATIONAL MONUMENT IN UTAH!
FROM THERE, THE SIGNAL WAS BOUNCED BACK 200 KILOMETERS TO A POINT IN THE MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK IN COLORADO!
RAINBOW BRIDGE
COLORADO
MESA VERDE
OKLAHOMA
ARIZONA NEW MEXICO
TEXAS
BAHAMA ISLAND
AND THE SAME BOUNCE PROCESS WAS REPEATED WHEN MESA VERDE SPOKE TO THE ISLAND!

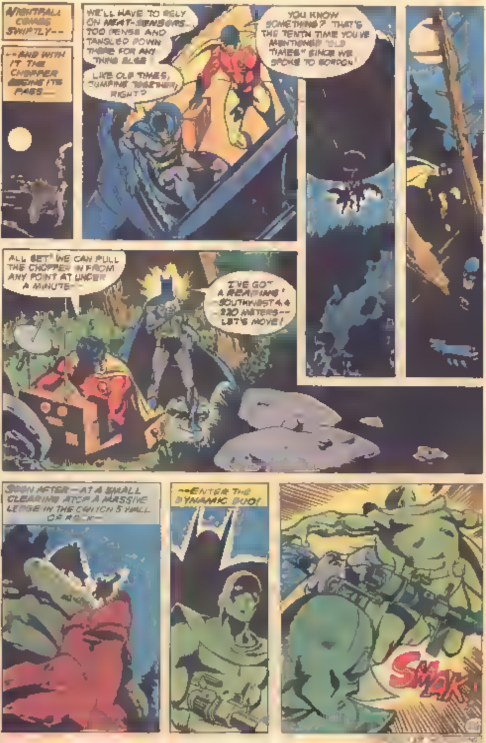

UTAH
COLORADO
RAINBOW BRIDGE
NATIONAL MONUMENT
MESA VERDE
ARIZONA
NEW MEXICO
APPARENTLY THIS RAINBOW BRIDGE SET-UP IS USED FOR ONE-TO-ONE COMMUNICATION WHEREAS THE BAY OF RAINBOW'S BEAM IS FOR TRANSMITTING TO ALL SEVEN CONNECTIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY!
IT'S MY GUESS BOTH SYSTEMS ARE BASED IN MESA VERDE!
IN SHORT-- THEIR CONTINENTAL HEAD-QUARTERS -- HIDDEN AWAY SOMEWHERE IN A NATURAL WILDERNESS--!
--A NATIONAL PARK WHERE VISITORS ARE FREE TO COME AND GO -- UNHINDERED, UNOBSERVED, UNKNOWN!
BUT WHERE IN MESA VERDE ?
I WON'T KNOW THAT TILL I CAN HOME IN AT A SHORTER RANGE.
I'LL GO BY CHOPPER AND DO SOME SCOUTING IN DAYLIGHT
GOING ALONE AGAIN ?
WELL I LEAVE IT TO YOU AREN'T YOU NEEDED HERE ?
THAT'S WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO HEAR, WOULDN'T YOU ?
IF YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING OFF ON OUR OWN -- YOU'RE NOT SURE WHERE-- AGAINST YOU'RE NOT SURE WHOM--
--ON WHAT WAS ORIGINALLY MY CASE--
WELL, GET THIS --RIGHT NOW I'M AS USEFUL HERE AS ANOTHER LEG IS TO A CENTIPEDE! I HAVE NO INTENTION OF STAYING BEHIND!
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT--!
HERE--!
LET'S GO, PARTNER!

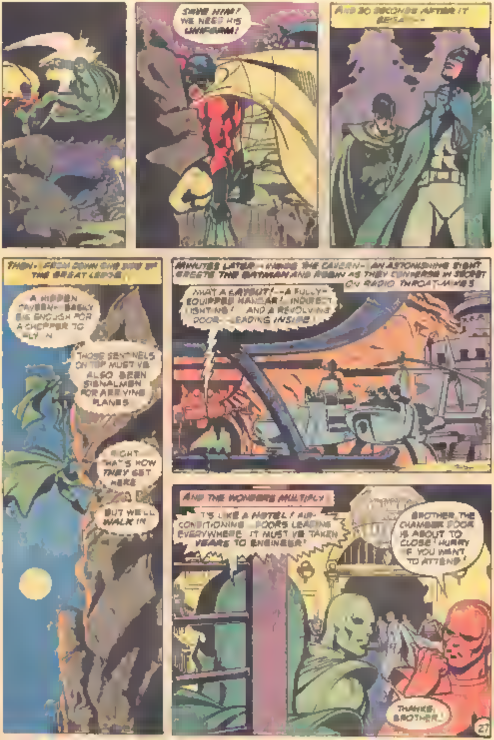
CHAPTER III

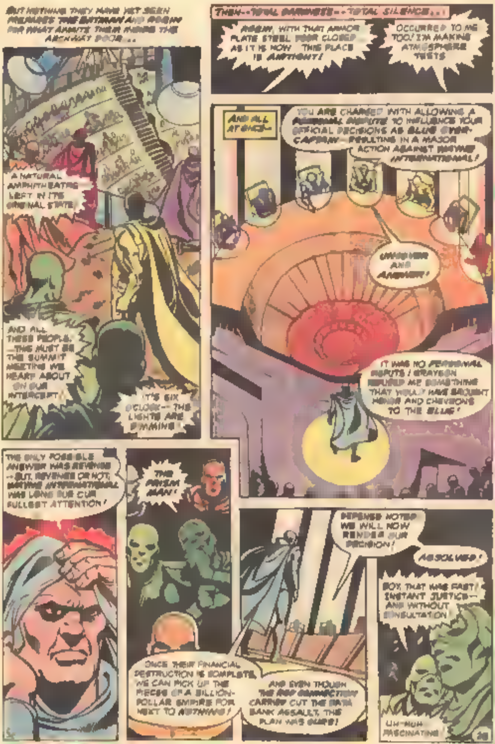

MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK -- A MAGNIFICENTLY PRESERVED HERITAGE... LITERALLY A "GREEN TABLE" 1500 FEET HIGH -- FROM WHICH CANYONS LEAD DOWN TO THE PARK'S GREATEST TREASURE AND ATTRACTION -- THE FANTASTIC PUEBLO CLIFF DWELLINGS, MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS OLD.
EARLY TWILIGHT. FOR AN HOUR NOW, THE BATMAN'S CHOPPER --IN ONE OF ITS ADAPTATIONS --HAS BEEN LAZILY CIRCLING THE PARK...
WE'VE ELIMINATED OUR FIRST GUESS -- THAT THEY'D ENTRENCHED THEMSELVES SOMEPLACE LIKE THE CLIFF PALACE BELOW, WHICH HAS OVER 200 ROOMS AND 23 KIVAS--CEREMONIAL CHAMBERS!

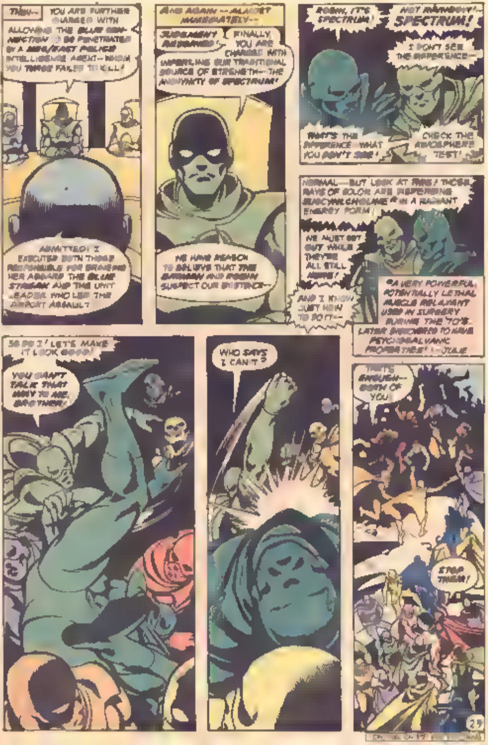

APEY SIGHT-SEEING TOURS
WE CAN ALSO RULE OUT THAT HAUNTED RUIN!
THE COMPUTER PLACES THE ORIGIN OF THE RAINBOW BEAM 302 METERS LOWER-- RIGHT DOWN THAT CANYON -- WHERE THERE ARE NO KNOWN EXCAVATIONS!


SO THAT'S WHERE WE'LL JUMP -- THE TWIN CHUTE FROM 500 METERS -- AND LET THE CHOPPER PROCEED ON AUTOMATIC TO A HOLD PATTERN BEYOND THE PARK!
IF THEY'RE USING SONIC DETECTION, WE'LL REGISTER AS A PASSING FLIGHT!
AND IF THEY'VE GOT RADAR?
YOU WOULD BRING THAT UP!

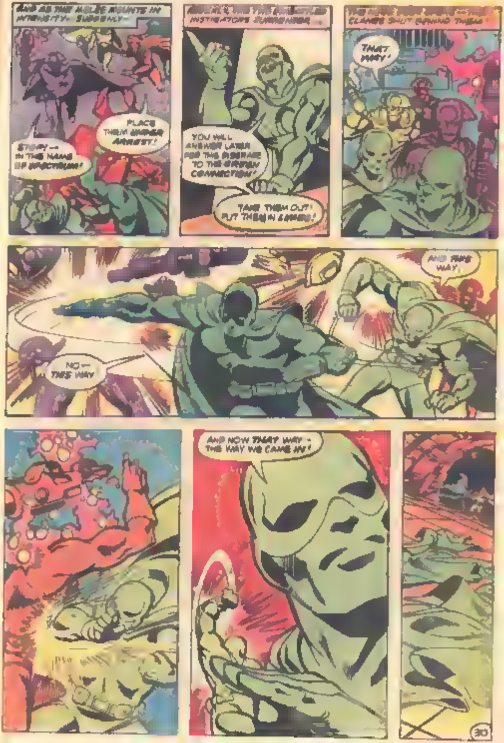

NIGHTFALL COMES SWIFTLY--
--AND WITH IT THE CHOPPER BEGINS ITS PASS--
WE'LL HAVE TO RELY ON HEAT-SENSORS... TOO DENSE AND TANGLED DOWN THERE FOR ANY THING ELSE
LIKE OLD TIMES, JUMPING TOGETHER, RIGHT?
YOU KNOW SOMETHING? THAT'S THE TENTH TIME YOU'VE MENTIONED "OLD TIMES" SINCE WE SPOKE TO GORDON!
ALL SET! WE CAN PULL THE CHOPPER IN FROM ANY POINT AT UNDER A MINUTE--
I'VE GOT A READING! SOUTHWEST 44 -- 220 METERS-- LET'S MOVE!
SOON AFTER--AT A SMALL CLEARING ATOP A MASSIVE LEDGE IN THE CANYON'S WALL OF ROCK--
--ENTER THE DYNAMIC DUO!
SMAK

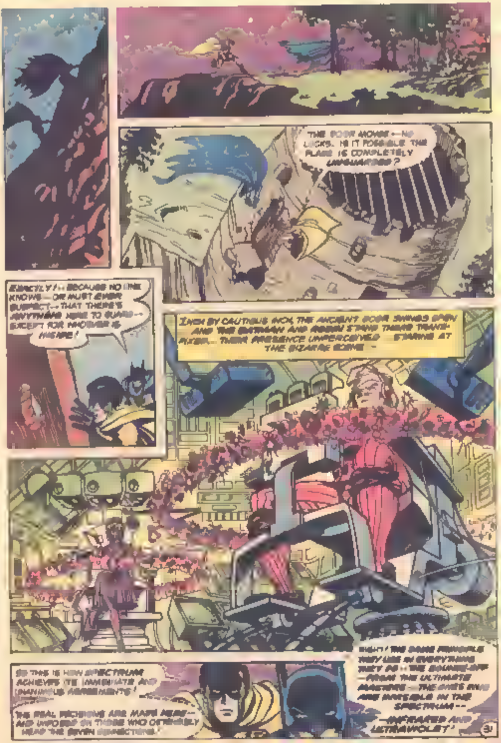

SAVE HIM! WE NEED HIS UNIFORM!
AND SO SECONDS AFTER IT BEGAN--
THEN-- FROM DOWN THE SIDE OF THE GREAT LEDGE
A HIDDEN CAVERN-- EASILY BIG ENOUGH FOR A CHOPPER TO FLY IN
THOSE SENTINELS ON TOP MUST'VE ALSO BEEN SIGNALMEN FOR ARRIVING PLANES
RIGHT THAT'S HOW THEY GET HERE
BUT WE'LL WALK IN
MINUTES LATER-- INSIDE THE CAVERN-- AN ASTONISHING SIGHT GREETS THE BATMAN AND ROBIN AS THEY CONVERSE IN SECRET ON RADIO THROAT-MIKES
WHAT A LAYOUT! --A FULLY-EQUIPPED HANGAR! INDIRECT LIGHTING! AND A REVOLVING DOOR-- LEADING INSIDE!
AND THE WONDERS MULTIPLY
IT'S LIKE A HOTEL! AIR-CONDITIONING-- DOORS LEADING EVERYWHERE! IT MUST'VE TAKEN YEARS TO ENGINEER!
BROTHER, THE CHAMBER DOOR IS ABOUT TO CLOSE! HURRY IF YOU WANT TO ATTEND!
THANKS, BROTHER!

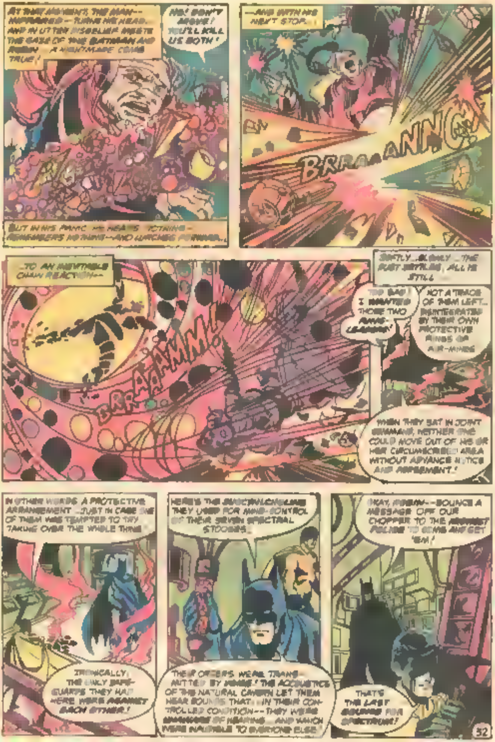

BUT NOTHING THEY HAVE YET SEEN PREPARES THE BATMAN AND ROBIN FOR WHAT AWAITS THEM INSIDE THE ARCHWAY DOOR...
A NATURAL AMPHITHEATRE LEFT IN ITS ORIGINAL STATE!
AND ALL THESE PEOPLE --THIS MUST BE THE SUMMIT MEETING WE HEARD ABOUT ON OUR INTERCEPT!
IT'S SIX O'CLOCK-- THE LIGHTS ARE DIMMING!
THEN--TOTAL DARKNESS--TOTAL SILENCE...
ROBIN, WITH THAT ARMOR PLATE STEEL DOOR CLOSED AS IT IS NOW THIS PLACE IS AIRTIGHT!
OCCURRED TO ME TOO! I'M MAKING ATMOSPHERE TESTS
AND ALL AT ONCE--
YOU ARE CHARGED WITH ALLOWING A PERSONAL DISPUTE TO INFLUENCE YOUR OFFICIAL DECISIONS AS BLUE OVER-CAPTAIN -- RESULTING IN A MAJOR ACTION AGAINST WAYNE INTERNATIONAL!
UNDERSTAND AND ANSWER!
IT WAS NO PERSONAL DISPUTE! GRAYSON REFUSED ME SOMETHING THAT WOULD HAVE BROUGHT HONOR AND CHEVRONS TO THE BLUE!
THE ONLY POSSIBLE ANSWER WAS REVENGE --BUT, REVENGE OR NOT, WAYNE INTERNATIONAL WAS LONG DUE OUR FULLEST ATTENTION!
THE PRISM MAN!
ONCE THEIR FINANCIAL DESTRUCTION IS COMPLETE, WE CAN PICK UP THE PIECES OF A BILLION-DOLLAR EMPIRE FOR NEXT TO NOTHING!
AND EVEN THOUGH THE RED CONNECTION CARNEY CUT THE DATA BANK ASSAULT, THE PLAN WAS OURS!
DEFENSE NOTED! WE WILL NOW RENDER OUR DECISION!
ABSOLVED!
BOY, THAT WAS FAST! INSTANT JUSTICE-- AND WITHOUT CONSULTATION!
UH-HUH FASCINATING!

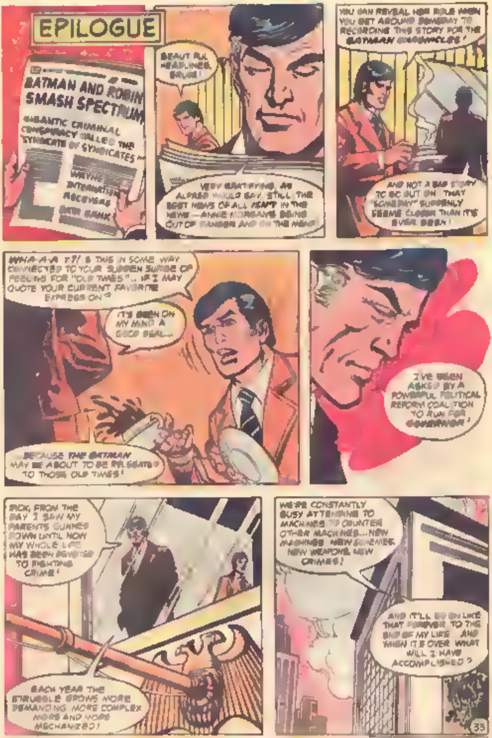

THEN--
YOU ARE FURTHER CHARGED WITH ALLOWING THE BLUE CON-NECTION TO BE PENETRATED BY A MID/EAST POLICE INTELLIGENCE AGENT-- WHOM YOU THREE FAILED TO KILL!
ADMITTED! I EXECUTED BOTH THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING HER ABOARD THE BLUE STREAK AND THE UNIT LEADER WHO LED THE AIRPORT ASSAULT!
AND AGAIN -- ALMOST IMMEDIATELY--
JUDGMENT RESERVED!
FINALLY, YOU ARE CHARGED WITH IMPERILING OUR TRADITIONAL SOURCE OF STRENGTH-- THE ANONYMITY OF SPECTRUM!
WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE BATMAN AND ROBIN SUSPECT OUR EXISTENCE--
ROBIN, IT'S SPECTRUM!
NOT RAINBOW!-- SPECTRUM!
I DON'T SEE THE DIFFERENCE--
THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE-- WHAT YOU DON'T SEE!
CHECK THE ATMOSPHERE TEST!
NORMAL-- BUT LOOK AT THIS! THOSE RAYS OF COLOR ARE DISPERSING SUCCINYLCHOLINE* IN A RADIANT ENERGY FORM!
WE MUST GET OUT WHILE THEY'RE ALL STILL HERE!
AND I KNOW JUST HOW TO DO IT--
*A VERY POWERFUL, POTENTIALLY LETHAL MUSCLE RELAXANT USED IN SURGERY DURING THE '70'S. LATER DISCOVERED TO HAVE PSYCHOGALVANIC PROPERTIES! --JULIE
SO DO I! LET'S MAKE IT LOOK GOOD!
YOU CAN'T TALK THAT WAY TO ME, BROTHER!
WHO SAYS I CAN'T?
THAT'S ENOUGH-- BOTH OF YOU!
STOP THEM!

[illegible]


AND AS THE MELEE MOUNTS IN INTENSITY, SUDDENLY--
PLACE THEM UNDER ARREST!
STOP! -- IN THE NAME OF SPECTRUM!
[illegible] INSTIGATORS SURRENDER...
YOU WILL ANSWER LATER FOR THE DISGRACE TO THE GREEN CONNECTION!
TAKE THEM OUT! PUT THEM IN LINERS!
[illegible] CLANGS SHUT BEHIND THEM!
THAT WAY!
AND THIS WAY.
NO -- THIS WAY
AND NOW THAT WAY -- THE WAY WE CAME IN!


THE DOOR MOVES -- NO LOCKS. IS IT POSSIBLE THE PLACE IS COMPLETELY UNGUARDED?
EXACTLY! -- BECAUSE NO ONE KNOWS -- OR MUST EVER SUSPECT -- THAT THERE'S ANYTHING HERE TO GUARD -- EXCEPT FOR WHOEVER IS HERE!
INCH BY CAUTIOUS INCH, THE ANCIENT DOOR SWINGS OPEN AND THE BATMAN AND ROBIN STAND THERE TRANSFIXED -- THEIR PRESENCE UNPERCEIVED -- STARING AT THE BIZARRE SCENE --
SO THIS IS HOW SPECTRUM ACHIEVES ITS IMMEDIATE AND UNANIMOUS AGREEMENTS!
THE REAL DECISIONS ARE MADE HERE -- AND IMPOSED ON THOSE WHO OSTENSIBLY HEAD THE SEVEN DIRECTORS!
RIGHT! THE SAME PRINCIPLE THEY USE IN EVERYTHING THEY DO -- THE DOUBLE-OFF -- FROM THE ULTIMATE MASTERS -- THE ONES WHO ARE INVISIBLE IN THE SPECTRUM --
--INFRARED AND ULTRAVIOLET!


AT THAT MOMENT, THE MAN-- HYPNOTIZED -- TURNS HIS HEAD... AND IN UTTER DISBELIEF MEETS THE GAZE OF THE BATMAN AND ROBIN -- A NIGHTMARE COME TRUE!
NO! DON'T MOVE! YOU'LL KILL US BOTH!
BUT IN HIS PANIC HE HEARS NOTHING -- REMEMBERS NOTHING -- AND LURCHES FORWARD...
--AND WITH HIS NEXT STOP...
BRRAAANNG!
...TO AN INEVITABLE CHAIN REACTION--
BRRAAAMMM!
SOFTLY... SLOWLY... THE DUST SETTLES, ALL IS STILL
TOO BAD! I WANTED THOSE TWO RING-LEADERS!
NOT A TRACE OF THEM LEFT... DISINTEGRATED BY THEIR OWN PROTECTIVE RINGS OF AIR-MINES
WHEN THEY SAT IN JOINT COMMAND, NEITHER ONE COULD MOVE OUT OF HIS OR HER CIRCUMSCRIBED AREA WITHOUT ADVANCE NOTICE AND AGREEMENT!
IN OTHER WORDS A PROTECTIVE ARRANGEMENT... JUST IN CASE ONE OF THEM WAS TEMPTED TO TRY TAKING OVER THE WHOLE THING
IRONICALLY, THE ONLY SAFEGUARDS THEY HAD HERE WERE AGAINST EACH OTHER!
HERE'S THE [illegible] THEY USED FOR MIND-CONTROL OF THEIR SEVEN SPECTRAL STOOGES...
THEIR ORDERS WERE TRANSMITTED BY NOISE! THE ACOUSTICS OF THE NATURAL CAVERN LET THEM HEAR SOUNDS THAT -- IN THEIR CONTROLLED CONDITION -- THEY WERE UNAWARE OF HEARING... AND WHICH WERE INAUDIBLE TO EVERYONE ELSE!
OKAY, ROBIN--BOUNCE A MESSAGE OFF OUR CHOPPER TO THE NEAREST POLICE TO COME AND GET 'EM!
THAT'S THE LAST SOUNDS FOR SPECTRUM!


EPILOGUE
BATMAN AND ROBIN SMASH SPECTRUM
GIGANTIC CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY CALLED THE "SYNDICATE OF SYNDICATES"
WAYNE INTERNATION RECEIVES [illegible] BANK
BEAUTIFUL HEADLINES, BRUCE!
VERY GRATIFYING, AS ALFRED WOULD SAY. STILL, THE BEST NEWS OF ALL ISN'T IN THE NEWS -- ANNIE [illegible] BEING OUT OF DANGER AND ON THE MEND!
YOU CAN REVEAL HER ROLE WHEN YOU GET AROUND SOMEDAY TO RECORDING THIS STORY FOR THE BATMAN CHRONICLES!
AND NOT A BAD STORY TO GO OUT ON. THAT "SOMEDAY" SUDDENLY SEEMS CLOSER THAN IT'S EVER BEEN!
WHA-A-A ?!? IS THIS IN SOME WAY CONNECTED TO YOUR SUDDEN SURGE OF FEELING FOR "OLD TIMES"... IF I MAY QUOTE YOUR CURRENT FAVORITE EXPRESSION?
IT'S BEEN ON MY MIND A GOOD DEAL...
...BECAUSE THE BATMAN MAY BE ABOUT TO BE RELEGATED TO THOSE OLD TIMES!
I'VE BEEN ASKED BY A POWERFUL POLITICAL REFORM COALITION TO RUN FOR GOVERNOR!
DICK, FROM THE DAY I SAW MY PARENTS GUNNED DOWN UNTIL NOW MY WHOLE LIFE HAS BEEN DEVOTED TO FIGHTING CRIME!
EACH YEAR THE STRUGGLE GROWS MORE DEMANDING, MORE COMPLEX, MORE AND MORE MECHANIZED!
WE'RE CONSTANTLY BUSY ATTENDING TO MACHINES TO COUNTER OTHER MACHINES... NEW MACHINES, NEW SCHEMES, NEW WEAPONS, NEW CRIMES!
AND IT'LL GO ON LIKE THAT FOREVER, TO THE END OF MY LIFE. AND WHEN IT'S OVER WHAT WILL I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED?

THE BATTLE NEARLY FOUR DECADES IN THE MAKING!

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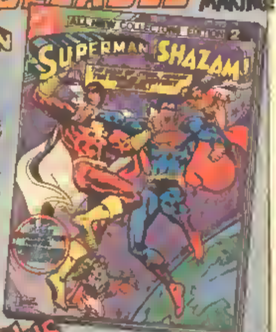
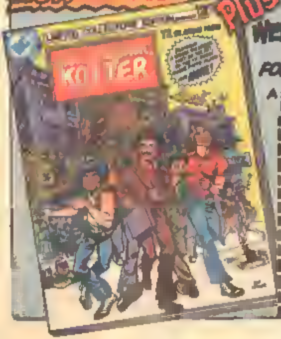
DICK GIORDANO!



NOW [illegible] SALE!



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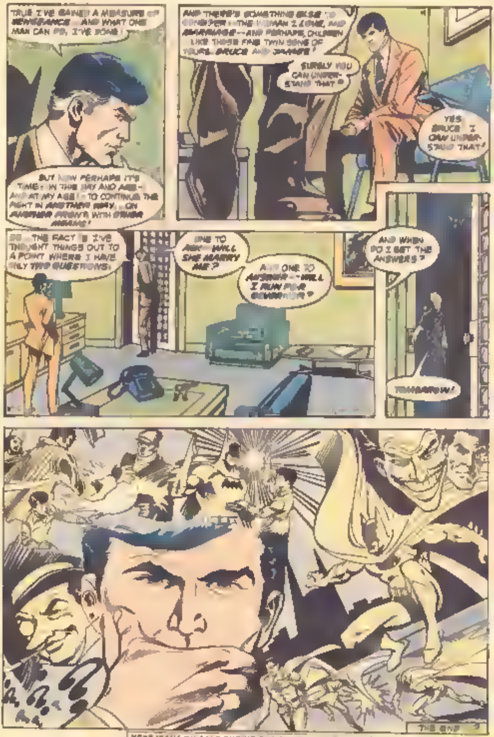
TRUE, I'VE GAINED A MEASURE OF VENGEANCE -- AND WHAT ONE MAN CAN DO, I'VE DONE!
AND THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE TO CONSIDER -- THE WOMAN I LOVE, AND MARRIAGE -- AND PERHAPS, CHILDREN -- LIKE THOSE FINE TWIN SONS OF YOURS, BRUCE AND JAMES!
SURELY YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT?
YES, BRUCE... I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT!
BUT NOW PERHAPS IT'S TIME -- IN THIS DAY AND AGE -- AND AT MY AGE! -- TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT IN ANOTHER WAY... ON ANOTHER FRONT, WITH OTHER MEANS!
SO... THE FACT IS I'VE THOUGHT THINGS OUT TO A POINT WHERE I HAVE ONLY TWO QUESTIONS:
ONE TO ASK -- WILL SHE MARRY ME?
AND ONE TO ANSWER -- WILL I RUN FOR GOVERNOR?
AND WHEN DO I GET THE ANSWERS?
TOMORROW!
THE END

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE FIRST WEEK IN APRIL!

BAT-SIGNALS

[illegible]

Dear Julie and Bob,

Let me open my letter with my most controversial statement: I liked Sal Amendola's art on **BATMAN #296!** Why controversial? Because I know the taste of the fickle public and most of them won't like it. But I did! Bringing back pleasant memories of his "Night of the Stalker," Sal's art is moving, moody, dramatic and expressive. Look at that cover he did, for pity's sake!

Now, to conform to most fans' idea of what art "should" be, Sal's pencils would need to be cleaned up and refined by something like Giordano-style inking. My only complaint was that his shading on **Batman's** cloak was too realistic and not the conventional "look" of stylized shadows. On page 11 **The Batman** just was not scary enough!

As far as the story goes, "Sinister Straws of the Scarecrow" was my favorite David V. Reed script thus far. Any **Batman-Scarecrow** conflict should emphasize the aspect of a battle of fear, but this angle is all-too-often ignored (or poorly handled). This story is built on that basis and comes off very nicely indeed!

It seems to me that the strategies were very strategic, and the plot-twists were really clever, and those things don't usually impress a jaded fan like me. Finally, I'm glad they don't need those costume parades in Rutland anymore—besides, this is the type of remember story I really like to see!

BEPPE SABATINI
315 Division St.
East Lansing, MI 48823

Sal's art job inspired a number of interesting comments and letters—including the puzzling pair below!—BR

* * * * *

Dear Editor:

It was really good to see the return of a foe from the Golden Age. I mean, of course, the **Scarecrow** in **BATMAN #296.** What a way to celebrate Halloween! David V. Reed has done it again with a perfect script and is surely one of the greatest **Batman** writers ever.

The only thing to mar the tale was the art by Sal Amendola, though the suspense remained undisturbed nonetheless. "Sinister Straws of the Scarecrow" should be top-rated in everyone's opinion!

JOE HAMMELL
315 North Highland
National City, CA 92050

Dear Editor:

I cry for the return of Michael Golden! His work in **BATMAN #295** was excellent and I was sorry to see him replaced in **#296** by Sal Amendola. Though "Sinister Straws of the Scarecrow" was perfect story-wise (thanks to the ever-brilliant David V. Reed), Sal's art was terrible! You guys had a good combo in **#295,** so don't ruin it now! Get back on the mend and ask (beg, plead or otherwise entreat) Michael Golden to return. Surely he has plans to write those Bat-scripts.

JOE HAMMELL
315 N. Highland
National City, CA 92050

Are you twins, Joe? Or Dr. Joe-kyll and Mr. Hydemell? Or Two-Face in disguise? Or just confused? Mike Golden is an artist and Gerry Conway wrote #295, so which is the "good combo" you want us to bring back? —BR

* * * * *

Dear Gothamites:

Beginning with its menacing cover, **BATMAN #296** comes closer than any previous story to realizing the **Scarecrow's** great potential as a character. Past **Scarecrow** tales most leaned too heavily on gimmickry and **Scarecrow** himself seemed rather bland or even, in his **JOKER** appearance, foolish. **BATMAN #296** gives us a **Scarecrow** whose appearance is chillingly grotesque, whose manner is self-assured and cruel and whose plans are intricate and masterful. The "Strawmen" looked rather silly, but it was a nice stroke to make them be **Scarecrow's** former students, whom he still torments and bullies as in his teaching days. **Scarecrow** still relies on his scientific gimmicks, but the story's emphasis was shifted away from them to their effect on the victims. The scene plunging us into Slabo's nightmare of being buried alive was marvelous and there was a chilling sense of evil in the scenes where **Scarecrow** drives the terrified Slabo into doing his will. You've also found an interesting buried fear for **Batman,** and the way **Scarecrow** triggered it provided a real surprise.

David V. Reed also made us remember that **The Batman** himself can be a terrifying figure. The duel between **Batman** and **Scarecrow** thus becomes a competition between two masters of terror to decide who is stronger.

Is there anything at all wrong with the story? Well, I can't believe that **Scarecrow** would let Slabo return the half-million in bonds. Surely he's too greedy for that.

PETER SANDERSON
Room 521 Johnson Hall
Columbia Univ.
New York, NY 10027

Maybe Scarecrow thought the bonds weren't a good investment!—BR

* * * * *

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

Concerning your new letters title, did you know that seven years ago, in **BATMAN #234,** Peter C. Phillips of Lancs., England, suggested "Bat-Signals" as a replacement for "Letters to the Batcave"?

PAUL SALEK
118 Crest Avenue
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

Which only proves that Peter was seven years ahead of his time!—Bob Rozakis

BAT EXTRA SIGNALS

Dear Editor:

It is doubtful that the debate over who is the greatest Bat-writer will ever end. That it will continue is good, but I feel that making a single choice is almost impossible. Each writer has a feel for the character of **The Batman.** Each can be heightened or depressed by his choice of artist. Each writer, however, gives us a different interpretation and in recent months I have read stories of **The Batman** by four of them, each totally different. But all the writers are excellent. All of them should be used. And all of them can be improved!

First of all, we have Denny O'Neil's demonic version of **The Batman.** This one enthralls the reader with its chilling atmosphere and gives the Caped Crusader a mystique which spawns interesting story-lines. Tread is a basic good against evil motif. **Batman,** whose childhood was shattered by evil, is in turn shattering evil and leaving his opponents defeated both physically and psychologically. The result is a psychologically invincible hero, one the reader cannot believe would be ever overcome by an evil, no matter how great. And it is the art of Neal Adams that works best with this version. When dealing with such a seemingly invincible character, the realism of Neal's art is the perfect complement.

Second, we have David V. Reed's master detective who has a fertile imagination and gives us brilliant, fast-paced, moving adventures. His story in **BATMAN #303** "The Daily Death of Terry Tremayne," was the first **BATMAN** I ever bought and it had what I enjoy in all his stories, a plot which utilizes the best of detection! Reed and Ernie Chan were the perfect team, but with Ernie gone to other things, J.L. Garcia Lopez would be just the right artist.

Then there are Bob Rozakis' **Batman** tales, which are always fun to read. Bob has an excellent flood of ideas and gives **The Batman** a kind of "But you've never seen me do this before" atmosphere. In writing style, he is the direct antithesis of Mr. Reed. And while his stories may not be the best-composed, I always like 'em. Bob is more suited to writing stories with super-villains than the other two and I think he and John Calnan are a superb combo.

Finally, there is Steve Englehart, whose **Batman** tales took a long time to grow on me. Maybe it was the Marshall Rogers art that made me take notice, but I've found that even the pre-Rogers tales have the Englehart mark of excellence. His stories always have a ranging vision and marked scope, spilling one story into another. And while plotlines are woven together, there is no lagging. His "Golden Age" style is great with Marshall's art and I love it for what it is.

Four totally different writers. (And I didn't even mention Gerry Conway and Marty Pasko!) The point I wish to stress is simple: Keep them all writing. Nothing could be duller than a steady diet of one style. With this variety they make up for each other's weaknesses, complement each other's strengths, and keep the readers interested in all points and at all times.

Keep up the great work!

TOM MCKEY
217 Edge Avenue
Valparaiso, FL 32580

Variety is the spice of DC Comics, Tom—and Bat-fans can get it! David V. Reed is our regular writer there in BATMAN, with Denny O'Neil (teamed with Michael Golden on art) handling the Caped Crusader over in BATMAN FAMILY! In 'TEC, with the departure of Steve Englehart, Len Wein has taken over with Marshall Rogers penciling. And on the bench, ready to pinch-hit if necessary, are Gerry Conway and—Bob Rozakis.

* * * * * * *

Hear me now, human, of the heroes of the planet Earth. Some are gods and mortal men tremble in awe of their powers—the powers of Death himself. Some are alien born and a Universe pays homage to their might. Some with magic fight, and some are strangely changed, plucked by fate from the ranks of normal men. But none compare to this dread figure of the night, this single man who stalks in darkness and brings fear to all who dare to challenge his name. Watch him, his mind a power so great that no man can deny it. See him, his nerves of steel prepared to snap, to move with speed none can compare. Hear him, his flight so swift and silent that none may know his coming. He lurks among the shadows, no wrong too small for him to fight, no evil too powerful for him to crush. He is brilliance, he is skill, he is the greatest of them all—that dreaded creature of the night,

THE BATMAN!

(After spending a joyful hour perusing my collection of the Caped Crusader, I just had to add something.)

BRUCE PARRELLO
Urbana, IL

* * * * * *

Got something "EXTRA" to say about The Batman? Send it to BAT-SIGNALS—EXTRA, DC Comics Inc., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10019. And we promise we'll return with BATMAN #400 to run another special page like this! Hope you enjoyed our 300th anniversary special and this "EXTRA" bonus.

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